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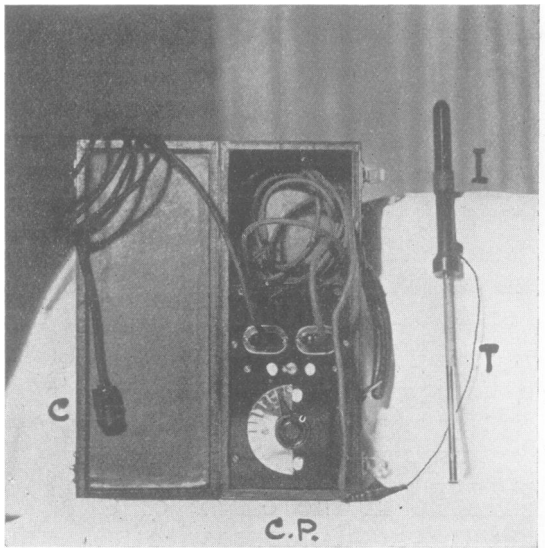
AN ELECTRIC HEATER FOR PROSTATITIS

By ERIC ASSINDER, M.D.

HEAT has long been recognised as a useful form of treatment in the common condition of prostatitis, and many methods of applying heat to the prostate have been devised. Undoubtedly one of the best is diathermy, but this method has several disadvantages. A special room is necessary, or at least desirable: the cost of the



I.—Instrument. T.—Thermometer. C.P.—Control Panel.
C.—Cable to main.

instrument is not small, and in my experience the temperature which can be tolerated as a general rule is comparatively low (certainly not more than 112° to 115° F. in most cases) when heat is being produced by a diathermy current.

For some time I have been in communication with instrument makers, with the result that Messrs. Wearing and Coulthard have made for me a simple electric heater at small cost, and of small bulk, which can be attached to

an electric main supply, and which allows of heat being applied to the prostate per rectum.

I have used the instrument on several cases with very marked clinical success; the temperature tolerated before pain is produced is, on an average, 125° F.

There is, of course, no electric high frequency current running through the prostatic tissues, but I have always been of opinion that the value of diathermy in prostatitis is on account of the temperature produced and not due to current passing.

The apparatus consists of two parts :—

(I.) The Instrument.
(II.) The Control Panel.

(I.) The instrument consists of a tube with shell nose and cap end, and is constructed of surgical ebonite. It contains a specially wound element in the nose end.

The element is hollow, and houses the bulb end of a thermometer, which registers the temperature created in the element.

The thermometer is positioned centrally, and a portion of the housing is cut away so that readings can be taken during application.

(II.) The control panel is carried in a portable case. On the underside of this panel is mounted a bank of variable resistances actuated through a control knob and pointer situated on the top side of the panel, and which is graduated from OFF to FULL.

A separate OFF and ON switch is also incorporated, and the leads are detachable.

The leads to mains and instrument may be coiled and placed in the space at the side of the panel in the case.

By means of this panel the temperature of the instrument can be delicately controlled.

The size of the box in all is 14 × 5 × 5 inches. The instrument is 14 inches long (including the thermometer).

The cost of the whole outfit is 10 guineas, and can be obtained from Messrs. Wearing and Coulthard, 45 Great Charles Street, Birmingham, 3.